



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

*501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814*

*916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900*

For Immediate Release
November 28, 2001

**TWO MEN INDICTED FOR MULTIPLE POUND
METHAMPHETAMINE DISTRIBUTION**

SACRAMENTO--A federal grand jury here has charged two Northern California men, Jose Noel Pinto, 44, and Joaquin Lopez, 29, both from Modesto, with violations involving methamphetamine trafficking, United States Attorney John K. Vincent said today.

According to the indictment, both men were charged with conspiring to distribute methamphetamine. Additionally, Pinto was charged in three counts, and Lopez was charged in two counts, with distributing methamphetamine. Finally, Lopez was charged with possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

According to court records, on July 17, 2001, Pinto allegedly sold one-half pound of methamphetamine to a confidential informant, and also sold one pound quantities of methamphetamine to a confidential informant on August 8, 2001, and August 21, 2001. Pinto allegedly was observed meeting with Lopez before and after both of these sales. In fact, after the August 8th sale, in which Pinto allegedly sold the pound of methamphetamine for \$3,300 in cash, Lopez was found to be in possession of \$2,000 in cash.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

Pinto and Lopez both face a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison. They face a maximum penalty of life in prison, and a fine of up to \$4 million.

This case was investigated by the San Joaquin County Combined Rural and City Narcotic Enforcement Team (CRACNET), the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force (HIDTA-Modesto), the Stanislaus County Drug Enforcement Administration (SDEA), and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

###